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TEN CENT POCKET SERIES NO. 324  
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

# Life of Abraham Lincoln

John Hugh Bowers

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HALDEMAN-JULIUS COMPANY  
GIRARD, KANSAS



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# Life of Abraham Lincoln

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## LIFE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

The story of Lincoln, revealing how one American, by his own honest efforts, rose from the most humble beginning to the most high station of honor and worth, has inspired millions and will inspire millions more. The log cabin in which he was born, the ax with which he split the rails, the few books with which he got the rudiments of an education, the light of pine knots by which he studied, the flatboat on which he made the long trip to New Orleans, the slave mart at sight of which his sympathetic soul revolted against the institution of human slavery—these are all fraught with intense interest as the rude forces by which he slowly builded his great character.

Great suffering taught him great sympathy. His great sympathy for men gave him great influence over men. As a lonely motherless little boy living in the pitiless poverty of the backwoods he learned both humility and appreciation. Then from a gentle step-mother he learned the beauty of kindness.

As a clerk in a small store that failed, as a defeated candidate for the legislature, as Captain in the Black Hawk War, as student of Law in his leisure moments, as partner in a small store that failed, as Postmaster at

1818 little Abraham's mother, delicate, refined, pathetic and too frail for such rude life, sickened and felt that the end was near. She called her little children to her bed of leaves and skins and told them to "love their kindred and worship God," and then she died and left them only the memory of her love.

Thomas Lincoln made a rude coffin himself, but there were no ceremonies at that most pathetic funeral when he laid his young wife in her desolate grave in the forest. Little Lincoln was nine years old, and the mystery of death, the pitiless winter, the lone grave, the deep forest—shivering with his sister in the cold cabin—it all made a deep impression on the sensitive boy.

Late in the year 1819 Thomas Lincoln went back to Kentucky, and there courted and married a widow named Sarah Buck Johnston, who had once been his sweetheart. She brought with her some household goods and her own three children. She dressed the forlorn little Lincolns in some of the clothing belonging to her children. She was described as tall, straight as an Indian, handsome, fair, talkative and proud. Also she had the abundant strength for hard labor. She and little Abraham learned to love each other dearly.

Abraham went to school in all less than a year, but this good stepmother encouraged him to study at home and he read every book he heard of within a circuit of many miles. He read the Bible, Aesop's Fables, Murray's English Reader, Robinson Crusoe, The Pilgrim's Progress, A History of the United States,



Weem's Life of Washington and the Revised Statutes of Indiana. He studied by the fire-light and practiced writing with a pen made from a buzzard's quill dipped in ink made from brier roots. He practiced writing on the subjects of Temperance, Government, and Cruelty to Animals. The unkindness so often common to those frontier folks shocked his sensitive soul. He practiced speaking by imitating the itinerant preacher and by telling stories to any who would give him an audience. He walked fifteen miles to Boonville to attend court and listen to the lawyers.

At nineteen he was six feet and two inches tall, weighed one hundred and fifty pounds, had long arms and legs, slender body, large and awkward hands and feet, but not a large head. He is pictured as wearing coon-skin cap, linsey-woolsey shirt, and buckskin breeches that were often too short. He said that his father taught him to work but never taught him to love it—but he did work hard and without complaining. He was said to do much more work than any ordinary man at splitting rails, chopping, mowing, ploughing, doing everything that he was asked to do with all his might. It was at this age that he went on the first trip with a flat boat down to New Orleans. This was an interesting adventure; and there had been sorrows, also; his sister Sarah had married and died in child-birth.

In the spring of 1830 the roving spirit of Thomas Lincoln felt the call of the West and they set out for Illinois. John Hanks met them five miles northwest of Decatur in Ma-

con County, where on a bluff overlooking the muddy Sangamon they built a cabin, split rails, fenced fifteen acres and broke the prairie. Young Lincoln was twenty-one and free, but he remained at home during the summer, helping his father and his devoted step-mother to establish their new home. The following winter he split the historic rails for Mrs. Nancy Miller—"four hundred for every yard of jeans dyed with walnut juice necessary to make him a pair of trowsers."

In the spring, a pioneer adventurer, Denton Offut, engaged Abraham, with Hanks and one other helper, to take a boat load of provisions to New Orleans, for the wages of fifty cents a day and a bonus of sixty dollars for the three. This and the preceding trip down the river gave Lincoln the sight of slavery which caused him to say, "If ever I get a chance to hit that thing I'll hit it hard."

New Salem was a very small village destined to be of only a few years duration. Here Offut erected a small general store and placed Lincoln in charge while Offut having other unimportant business ventures went about the community bragging that his clerk, Lincoln, was the best man in the country and would some day be president of the United States. Offut's boasting attracted the attention of the Clary's Grove boys, who lived near New Salem, and they determined upon a wrestling match between Lincoln and their champion bully, Jack Armstrong. Lincoln did his best to avoid it, and a prominent citizen stopped the encounter. The result was that Armstrong and his gang

Lincoln's friends and later gave him most hearty political support at times when support of just such men as Armstrong was an important political asset.

During this time Lincoln continued his studies, and feeling the need to study English Grammar he ransacked the neighborhood until he found trace of one some six miles away and walked over to buy or borrow it; brought it back in triumph and studied it exhaustively.

About this time we have some narratives concerning his honesty that compare favorably with the story of Washington and the cherry tree. While he was keeping Offut's store a woman overpaid him four pence and when he found the mistake he walked several miles that evening to return the pennies before he slept. On another occasion in selling a half pound of tea he discovered that he had used too small a weight and he hastened forth to make good the deficiency. Indeed one of his chief traits all his life was absolute honesty.

He was chosen to pilot the first steamboat, the *Talisman*, up the Sangamon. At Springfield they held a banquet to celebrate the event but Lincoln was not invited because they only invited the "gentlemen" and Lincoln was only the pilot.

He spent all his spare time studying Law or History, and had been from his youth an admirer of the romantic figure of Henry Clay. He adopted most of Clay's principles as his own, especially that of the gradual, compensated emancipation of slaves, to which ideal he clung all his life. With such interests, it was

natural that when Offut failed and his job as store clerk ended, he should announce himself as a candidate for the legislature. His campaign was interrupted by the Black Hawk War. Lincoln volunteered. The Clary's Grove boys enlisted and elected him captain. He showed his kindness and courage when during the campaign he found his whole command, mutinous and threatening; and facing them he placed his own body between them and a poor friendly Indian, who, with safe conduct from General Cass, had taken refuge in camp. He saw no fighting and killed no Indians but was long afterward able to convulse Congress with a humorous account of his "war record." The war ended in time for him to get back and stump the county just before the election in which he was defeated.

In partnership with a man named Berry they bought out the little store in New Salem; but Berry drank and neglected the business. Lincoln was strictly temperate, but he spent all his spare moments studying Blackstone, a copy of which legal classic he had fortunately found in a barrel of rubbish he had obligingly bought from a poor fellow in trouble.

With both members of the firm thus preoccupied the business "winked out." Berry died, leaving Lincoln the debts of the firm, twelve hundred dollars,—to him an appalling sum, which he humorously called "the national debt"; and on which he continued to make payments when he could for the next fifteen years. For a time he was postmaster of New Salem, an office so small that Andrew Jackson

must have overlooked it. But the experience shows how scrupulous he always was; for when years afterward a government agent came to Springfield to make settlement Lincoln drew forth the very coins that he had collected in the postoffice, and though he had sorely needed the loan of them he had never even borrowed them for temporary use.

For a time he had a better position as Deputy Surveyor of Sangamon County. His work was accurate and he was doing well when in 1834 he again announced as a candidate for the legislature and was elected.

At Vandalia at the session of the legislature he first saw Stephen A. Douglas, then a lobbyist, and said of him, "He is the least man I ever saw." Lincoln at this session seemed to be learning, studying men and methods and prudently preparing for future success rather than endeavoring to seize opportunities prematurely.

This is the time when Lincoln fell in love with Ann Rutledge, a beautiful young woman of New Salem who was already betrothed to another. The other lover went East and did not return. Lincoln had hopes, but Ann took sick and died of brain fever. He was allowed to see her as she lay near the end, and the effect upon his kindly nature was terrible. There settled upon him a deep despondency. That fall and winter he wandered alone in the woods along the Sangamon, almost distracted with sorrow. When he seemed on the verge of insanity a friend, Bowling Green, took him to his own home and nursed him back to

health, and the grief settled into that temperamental melancholy, which, relieved only by his humor, was part of the deep mystic there was in him, part of the prophet, the sadness that so early baptised him in the tragedy of life, and taught him to pity a suffering world.

Again he ran for the legislature, announcing his policy: "for all sharing the privileges of the government who assist in bearing its burdens; for admitting all whites to the right of suffrage who pay taxes or bear arms (by no means excluding females). If elected, I shall consider the whole people of Sangamon as my constituents, as well those that oppose as those that support me. While acting as their representative I shall be governed by their will upon all subjects upon which I have the means of knowing what their will is; and upon all others I shall do what my own judgment teaches me will best advance their interests." He was always fundamentally democratic, was so close to the heart of humanity that he felt its mighty pulsations and knew intuitively what his people were thinking. His contemporaries thought that he had a dependable occult sense of public opinion.

One incident of this campaign shows Lincoln's versatility at repartee. George Forquer, who had been a Whig, changed over to be a Democrat and was appointed Register of the Land Office. His house, the finest in Springfield, had a lightning rod, the only one that Springfield had ever seen. At a meeting near Springfield, Lincoln spoke, and when he had finished, Forquer replied with some conde-

scension, calling Lincoln the "young man." Lincoln listened to the attack with folded arms and then made a spirited reply ending with the words: "The gentleman calls me a young man. I am older in years than I am in the tricks and trades of politicians. I desire to live and I desire place and distinction, but I would rather die now than, like the gentleman, live to see the day that I would change my politics for an office worth three thousand dollars per year, and then feel compelled to erect a lightning rod to protect a guilty conscience from an offended God."

The Whig ticket was elected, Lincoln leading, and the Sangamon delegation, seven representatives and two senators all over six feet tall were called the "Long Nine." At Vandalia Lincoln was the leader of the Long Nine and labored to advance legislation for public improvements to be financed by the sale of public lands. He confided to a friend that he was dreaming of the Governorship and was ambitious to become the "DeWitt Clinton of Illinois."

The Assembly voted for a colossal scheme of railroads and canals, and authorized a loan of twelve millions. These vast projects afforded unlimited opportunities for special legislation and in all this atmosphere of manoeuvre Lincoln was most skillful. He knew human nature and how to handle it. Log-rolling was the order of the day and so skillfully did the Long Nine function that they succeeded in removing the capital from Vandalia to Springfield. Though Lincoln did prove that he knew

"the tricks and trades of the politician" he was true to his convictions; as shown by the fact that, when the legislature passed resolutions "highly disapproving" of the formation of abolition societies and the doctrines promulgated by them, he voted against the resolutions; and furthermore he drew up a protest against the resolutions, and inducing his colleague, Dan Stone, to sign it with him, had his protest entered on the journal for March 3, 1837. While this protest was cautiously worded it did declare "the institution of slavery is founded upon injustice and bad policy." This was a real gratuitous expression of a worthy ideal contrary to self interest, for his constituents were at that time certainly not in any way opposed to slavery. It was only within a few months after this very time that the atrocious persecution and murder of Lovejoy occurred in the neighboring town of Alton.

When the Long Nine came home bringing the capital with them Springfield planned such a celebration as had not been seen since the day the Talisman came up the Sangamon. To this banquet Lincoln was not only invited but placed at the head of the board; having been only the pilot of the enterprise this time did not exclude him. He made a speech and made many friends in Springfield. The time was now opportune for him to move to Springfield. So in the year 1837, Abraham Lincoln, being twenty-eight years of age and a lawyer, packed his meager possessions in a pair of saddlebags and moved to the new Capital, then a town of less than two thousand inhabitants,



here to begin a new era in his life. Besides being very poor he still carried the burden of the "national debt" left to him from the failure of the partnership with Berry, but he had friends and a reputation for honesty. In time he pays the debt, and his friends increase in numbers.

The morning that Lincoln went into the store of Joshua Speed in Springfield, and indicated that he was looking for a place to stay, Speed said: "The young man had the saddest face I ever saw." Speed indicated that Lincoln could share Speed's own bed in a room above; Lincoln shambled up, dropped his saddle bags, shambled down again and said: "Well, Speed, I am moved." With John T. Stewart, his comrade in the Black Hawk campaign, he formed a law partnership. Lincoln and Stewart were both too much interested in politics to give their undivided devotion to the law. During their four years together they made a living, and had work enough to keep them busy but it was not of the kind that proved either very interesting or lucrative.

He spent much time making public speeches on a variety of occasions and subjects, obviously practicing the art of eloquent address for his own improvement. In 1838 he was again elected to the legislature and was minority candidate for Speaker.

Now Mrs. N. W. Edwards was one of the local aristocrats of Springfield, and her sister, Mary Todd from Kentucky, came to visit her. Mary Todd was beautiful and Lincoln and

Douglas were rivals for her hand. Observers at the time thought that with a brilliant and talented girl the graceful and dashing Douglas would surely be preferred. But Miss Todd made her own selection and she and Lincoln were engaged to be married on New Year's day, 1841.

The day came and the wedding was not solemnized. Now there came upon him again that black and awful melancholy. He wandered about in utter gloom. To help him, his good friend Joshua Speed took him away to Kentucky for a trip. Upon his return a reconciliation with Mary Todd led to their marriage, November, 1842. To Lincoln's kindly manner, his considerateness and his self-control, she was the opposite. The rule "opposites attract" may explain the union, and if the marriage was not ideally happy it may be conjectured that one more happy might have interfered with that career for which Destiny was preparing him.

In 1841, Stewart went to Congress and Lincoln dissolved the partnership to form another with Judge Stephen T. Logan who was accounted the best lawyer in Illinois. Contact with Logan made Lincoln a more diligent student and an abler practitioner of the law. But two such positive personalities could not long work in harmony, so in 1843 Lincoln formed a partnership with William H. Herndon, a man of abolitionist inclinations who remained Lincoln's junior partner until Lincoln's death and became his biographer. But they were very poor. The struggle was hard, and Lincoln and

his bride were of necessity very frugal. In 1841 he might have had the nomination for Governor, but he declined it; having given up his ambition to become the "DeWitt Clinton of Illinois." It will be remembered that the internal improvement theories had not worked so well in practice. The panic of 1837 had convinced both him and his supporters of the un wisdom of attempting such improvements on too large a scale at one time. Though he had been mistaken he seems not to have lost the support of his followers, for they were mistaken with him; and the experience shows that "it is more popular for a politician to be with his constituents in the wrong than to be in the right against them."

Though he declined the nomination for Governor, his ambitious wife encouraged his natural inclination to keep his eye on the political field, and to glance in the direction of Congress. His ambitions were temporarily thwarted. On Washington's birthday in 1842, during the Washington Temperance movement he made a speech on temperance. While the whole address was admirable and conceived in a high humanitarian tone it did not please all. He was full of a wise and gentle tolerance that sprang alike from his knowledge and his love of men.

When accused of being a temperance man he said "I don't drink."

He was criticised, and because of this, and because his wife was an Episcopalian, and an aristocrat, and because he had once accepted a challenge to fight a duel, which friends pre-

vented, his congressional ambitions had to be postponed. Also there were other candidates. He stood aside for Hardin and for Baker. In 1844 he was on the Whig electoral ticket and stumped the state for Henry Clay whom he greatly admired.

Finally in 1846 the Whigs nominated him for Congress. The Democrats nominated the pioneer Methodist preacher, Peter Cartwright, who used the Washington's birthday address against Lincoln and even the charge of atheism, which had no worthy foundation, for Lincoln was profoundly religious, though he never united with any church. He said that whenever any church would inscribe over its altar as the only condition for membership the words of Jesus; "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself;" he would join that church. Lincoln's life proved his sincerity in this statement.

Lincoln made a thorough campaign, watching most carefully all the many interests which can contribute to the success of a candidate, and was elected by an unusual majority. Moreover, he was the only Whig who secured a place in the Illinois delegation that year.

In 1847, when he took his seat in the thirtieth Congress, he saw there the last of the giants of the old days,—Webster, Calhoun, Clay and old John Quincy Adams, dying in his seat before the session ended. There were also Andrew Johnson, Alexander H. Stephens and David Wilmot. Douglas was there to take his new

seat in the Senate. The Mexican War was drawing to its close. The Whig party condemned the war as one that had been brought on simply to expand slave territory. Generals Taylor and Scott as well as many other prominent army officers were Whigs. This fact aided materially in justifying the Whig policy of denouncing the Democrats for entering into the war and at the same time voting adequate supplies for the prosecution of the war. Lincoln entered heartily into this party policy.

A few days after he had taken his seat in Congress he wrote back to Herndon a letter which closed humorously: "As you are all so anxious for me to distinguish myself I have concluded to do so before long." Accordingly, soon after he introduced a series of resolutions which became known as the "Spot Resolutions."

These resolutions referred to the President's message of May 11, 1846, in which the President expressed the reasons of the administration for beginning the war and said the Mexicans had "invaded our territory and shed the blood of our own citizens on our own soil." Lincoln quoted these lines and then asked the President to state the "exact spot" where these and other alleged occurrences had taken place. While these resolutions were never acted upon, they did afford him an opportunity to make a speech; and he made a good speech; not of the florid and fervid style that had characterized some of his early efforts; but a strong, logical speech that brought out the facts and made a favorable impression, thus saving him from being among the entirely unknown in the House.

With reference to his future career a paragraph concerning Texas is here quoted. He says: "Any people, anywhere being inclined and having the power, have the right to raise up and shake off the existing government, and form a new one that suits them better. This is a most valuable, a most sacred right,—a right which we hope and believe is to liberate the world. Nor is this right confined to a case in which the whole people of an existing government choose to exercise it. Any portion of such people, that can, may revolutionize, and make their own of so much of the territory as they inhabit." This political philosophy, so comfortably applied to Texas in 1846, is just what the Confederacy wished in 1861; and just exactly what Lincoln did not wish in 1861.

As Lincoln knew all along, his course concerning the war and the administration was displeasing some of his constituents; some of whom would rather be warlike than to be right, others honestly favored expansion. Like most of the other Whigs he had voted for the Ashmun amendment which said that the war had been "unnecessary and unconstitutionally commenced by the President." He learned that some of the people of Springfield would be displeased with an attitude that seemed to weaken the administration in a time of stress, but with Lincoln it was a matter of conscience and he met it fairly without evasion or any sort of coloring. And later when Douglas accused him of being unpatriotic he replied that he had not chosen to skulk, that he had voted for what he thought was the truth, and also reminded his

hearers that he had always voted with the rest of the Whigs for the necessary supplies to carry on the war after it had been commenced. He would have liked renomination, but Judge Logan was nominated and was not elected.

He was on the electoral ticket and stumped New England and Illinois for Taylor, as soon as Congress adjourned. The New England speeches were full of moral earnestness. In Boston he heard Governor Seward speak and said: "I reckon you are right. We have got to deal with this slavery question and give more time to it hereafter than we have been giving." In December he went back to Washington for the second session and worked consistently for the Wilmot Proviso, designed to exclude slavery from territory acquired from Mexico. At this second session he voted against a bill to exclude slavery from the District of Columbia, because he did not like the form of the bill and then introduced a measure himself designed to serve the same purpose.

When his term as Congressman expired he sought but failed to obtain the position of Commissioner of the General Land Office. He was offered the position of Governor of the newly organized territory of Oregon, but this, due somewhat to the sensible advice of his wife, he declined. Then he went back to Springfield to practice law again, and to travel the muddy roads of the old Eighth Circuit, a somewhat disappointed and disillusioned man; but as ever the same sincere, kindly brother to all his fellow men.

During the years from 1850 to 1860 the tall

figure of Lincoln, garbed in black, continued to be familiar to the people of Springfield, as he strode along the street between his dingy law office on the square and his home on Eighth Street. He was clean in person and in dress, and diligent in his law practice, but he was not good at collecting what was coming to him; badly as he needed money in those days. He had finally paid off his debts, but the death of his father had left his devoted stepmother needing some help; and his shiftless stepbrother to be expostulated with in letters full of very kindly interest and wholesome advice.

He worked hard and was rapidly becoming known as an excellent lawyer. He made friends of the best men in the state, and they referred to him affectionately as "Honest Abe" or "Old Abe," but they always addressed him respectfully as "Mr. Lincoln." His humor, never peccant, was related to his brooding melancholy, and was designed to smooth out the little rough places in life, which he so well understood, with all its tragedies and tears. Men loved him, not alone for his stories, but for his simplicity of life, his genuine kindness, his utter lack of selfishness. There was a fascination about his personality. He seemed somehow mysterious and at the same time simple. In fact he was always trying to make ideas seem simple and clear, and told stories to accomplish that purpose. He tried to make the case clear to the jury, and the issues clear to his hearers. In all his life which had ever its heavy sorrows, these years were probably the



brightest for him. He enjoyed the confidence of his people and the devotion of his friends. His fellow men of whatever degree in life, judge, lawyers, witnesses, jurors, litigants, all gathered affectionately around him to hear him talk and to tell stories. But he was not a mere story teller. His conversation was such as to draw men to him for its very worth. He was fundamentally serious, dignified, and never given to uncouth familiarities.

Though so notably kind, so deeply sympathetic, and at times so given to humor, when he was aroused he was terrible in his firmness, his resolution to win for the cause that was right, his stern rebuke for injustice, his merciless excoriation of falsehood and his relentless determination to see the truth prevail. False or careless witnesses dreaded his cross-examinations, and his opponents dreaded his effectiveness in handling a case before a jury.

Though he was called homely, there was a commanding dignity about his presence; his appearance inspired confidence; and when in the heat and passion of forensic effort, his features lighted up with a strange and compelling beauty and attractiveness. He was never petty, never quibbled and never tried to gain an unfair advantage or even use an unworthy means of attaining a worthy end. Consequently courts and juries believed what he said. He was a poor lawyer when on the wrong side of the case, and would not take a bad case if he knew it. Upon one occasion, when, in the very midst of a trial, he discovered that his client had acted fraudulently, he left the courtroom and when the

judge sent for him, he sent word back that he "had gone to wash his hands." He had too much human sympathy to be the most effective prosecutor unless there was a clear case of justice on his side; and he was too sympathetic to make money—for his charges were so small that Herndon and the other lawyers and even the judge expostulated with him. Though his name appears in the Illinois Reports in one hundred and seventy-three cases,—a record giving him first rank among the lawyers of the state, his income was probably not much over two or three thousand a year. And he was engaged in some of the most important cases in the state, such as Illinois Central Railroad Company v. The County of McLean, in which he was retained by the railroad and successfully prevented the taxation of land ceded to the railroad by the State,—and then had to sue to recover his modest fee of five thousand, which was the largest he ever received. In the McCormick reaper patent litigation he was engaged with Edwin M. Stanton, who treated him with discourtesy in the Federal Court at Cincinnati, called him "that giraffe," and prevented him from delivering the argument which he had so carefully and solicitously prepared. Such an experience was, of course, very painful to his sensitive nature, and it shows how great he was that he could forgive the injury entirely as he did later when he appointed Stanton as his Secretary of War, despite the protest of friends who recalled it all to him.

In one of his most notable murder cases he defended William or "Duff" Armstrong, the son

of his old friend, Jack Armstrong. It was a desperate case for William and for his mother Hannah, who had also been a warm friend to Lincoln when he was young. The youth was one of the wildest of the Clary's Grove boys, and a prosecuting witness told how, by the light of the moon, he saw the blow struck. Lincoln subjected the witness to one of his dreadful cross-examinations and then confronted him with the almanac of the year in which the crime was committed to show that the moon had set at the hour at which the witness claimed to have seen the blow struck by Armstrong. The boy was acquitted and Lincoln would accept no fee but the tears and gratitude of his old friends.

Another interesting case was one in which a principal witness was the aged Peter Cartright who had more than ten years before waged a campaign against Lincoln for Congress. Cart-right was the grandfather of "Peachy" Harrison who was charged with the murder of Greek Crafton. It was a dramatic moment when the old Methodist minister took the stand in front of Lincoln, and as his white head bowed, Lincoln had him tell how, as Greek Crafton lay dying, among his last words were "I want you to say to the man who killed me that I forgive him." After such a dying declaration and such a scene Lincoln was sure to make a speech that would move the hearts of any jury with pity and forgiveness such as he himself always felt for all souls in trouble; and Harrison was acquitted. It was such experiences at the bar that made him the great lawyer that he was;

and the great advocate of whatever he believed to be right; and prepared him to win the great cause of humanity before the whole people of the nation and of the world.

In 1852 Lincoln campaigned for Scott. In 1854 he seemed to be losing interest in politics when the news of the abrogation of the Missouri Compromise aroused him. This had been brought about by Douglas, the new leader of the Democrats, then one of the most influential men in Congress, and after the days of Webster, Clay and Calhoun, one of the foremost politicians in America. Douglas came back to Illinois to find many of his constituents in the North displeased with what they thought he had done to please the Democrats of the South. They thought that he was sacrificing the ideal of limiting slavery in order to advance his ambitions to become President. He set about to win back his state. He spoke in Springfield; and a few days later, Lincoln replied in a speech that delighted his friends and convinced them that in him they had a champion afire with enthusiasm for the cause of freedom.

Somewhat against his will he was nominated and elected to the legislature in the fall of 1854, but when he saw the dissatisfaction in the Democratic party he was encouraged to resign from the legislature and become a candidate for the United States Senate. The Democrats, though not in perfect harmony, had a majority, and he could not be elected, but helped to turn the tide for the revolting faction of the Democrats. Though disappointed he knew that the struggle was only begun.

The nation was aroused over the question of slavery. While many good people desired peace rather than agitation concerning such an irritating problem, the question of slavery in the territories had to be decided and the whole question of slavery would not down. In 1856 the Republican party was organized for the state of Illinois in a big convention at Bloomington at which Lincoln made a strong speech; and in the Republican National Convention held in Philadelphia a few weeks later he was given 110 votes for Vice-President. He was committed to the new Republican party and campaigned vigorously for Fremont, their candidate for President.

Lincoln's enthusiastic friends said he was already on the track for the Presidency. As the contest of 1858 for the Senate approached, it again appeared that the Democrats would be divided and Lincoln had some confidence of success. Out in Kansas the proslavery men, by an unfair vote, had adopted the Lecompton Constitution favoring slavery; President Buchanan urged Congress to admit Kansas with that fraudulent constitution; Douglas opposed that constitution and voted against the admission of Kansas as a slave state; thus angering the President and the South and delighting the Republicans of the North.

Now the time was approaching when, in the 1859 session of the Illinois legislature, Douglas would have to stand for re-election to the United States Senate. The legislators would be chosen in the campaign of 1858 largely on that issue. Douglas had become the foremost

man in the Democratic party, and any man who could beat him would have national recognition. The Republicans of Illinois nominated Lincoln, who challenged Douglas to a series of joint debates.

The famous Lincoln-Douglas Debates are full of interest and repay a full and careful study. but they will be treated very briefly in this volume.

Lincoln entered upon these debates in a lofty spirit and to the end pursued a high course, fraught with kindness, fairness, magnanimity and most commendable dignity. He said, "While pretending no indifference to earthly honors, I do claim, in this contest, to be actuated by something higher than anxiety for office," and apparently he was.

Lincoln looked into the future and foresaw the coming campaign of 1860 for the Presidency. He foresaw that Douglas would be the leader of the Democrats in that campaign and conducted the debate accordingly.

Lincoln thought not alone of momentary issues, but also of eternal verities. Some things which his friends wished him not to say, for fear it would lose him votes, he said, because they were things that were true and ought to be said: for example, "This nation cannot endure half slave and half free . . . A house divided against itself cannot stand. . . . I do not expect the house to fall. . . . I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do expect it to cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the

further spread of it and place it where in the public mind it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it until it will become alike lawful in all the states, old as well as new, North as well as South." While such utterances probably did cost him votes at the time, later his people could see that his prophetic vision had been right and their confidence in him, always strong, was accordingly increased.

Lincoln, with the training of the lawyer, the wily cross-examiner, the profound jurist, the farsighted statesman, forced Douglas into a dilemma between the northern Democrats of Illinois and the southern Democrats of the slave states. Lincoln was warned by his friends that Douglas would probably choose to please the Democrats of Illinois and be elected United States Senator; but Lincoln replied to his friends: "I am after larger game: the battle of 1860 is worth a hundred of this." Time proved that Lincoln was right. While Lincoln's friends guessed wisely as to the prediction that Douglas would choose to secure the Senatorship by pleasing the Democrats of Illinois, many of whom were opposed to slavery, Lincoln was wise in his prediction concerning the effect on the campaign of 1860 for President.

For example, one of the questions Lincoln asked was: "Can the people of a United States Territory, in any lawful way, against the wishes of any citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from its limits prior to the formation of a state constitution?" If Douglas should answer, "No," he would alienate Illinois; and

if he should answer "Yes," he would alienate the South. In a remarkably adroit manner Douglas answered, "Yes," and delighted his friends in Illinois; but later the effect in the South was clearly against him.

In the United States Senate Douglas had proved a match for the best debaters in the land, but he remarked after his series of debates with Lincoln that in all his sixteen years in the Senate he had not met one whom he would not rather encounter than Lincoln.

To the very end of the debate Lincoln kept the argument pitched on a very high plane of dignified logical search for clear truth; which was something unusual in political contests. He kept referring to such ideas as, "Is slavery right or wrong?" "It is the eternal struggle between right and wrong." Lincoln was pleading for humanity.

The debates were continued in seven of the largest cities of the states, and between the joint engagements the protagonists were speaking daily under circumstances of great strain. The prestige of being a Senator gave to Douglas comforts of travel not always accorded to Lincoln and at the end of the campaign he was worn out. When the election was over the popular vote was very close, but the members of the legislature gave Douglas a majority and he was returned to the Senate. But the campaign split the Democratic party and made Lincoln a national figure.

Lincoln, tired and disappointed and financially embarrassed by his personal expenses, could still cheer his friends with a joke. He



said, "I am like the boy that stumped his toe—it hurt too bad to laugh, but he was too big to cry." He added, "However, I am glad I made the race. It gave me a hearing on the great and durable question of the age which I could have had in no other way; and though I shall now sink from view and be forgotten, I believe that I have made some marks for the cause of civil liberty which will endure long after I am gone."

But he was not to be forgotten. He received congratulations from all parts of the nation. He got many calls to come and speak in the largest cities, most of which he declined, because he must return to his law practice and earn some money. However, when Douglas appeared in the Gubernatorial contest in Ohio, the temptation was too great, and he accepted calls to reply in Columbus and Cincinnati before very large audiences. He also accepted a call to speak in Cooper Union Institute in New York City, where he delivered a notable speech before a large and distinguished audience presided over by William Cullen Bryant. Lincoln says that he felt uncomfortable and "imagined that the audience noticed the contrast between his western clothes and the neat fitting suits of Mr. Bryant and others who sat on the platform." He spoke with great earnestness, and the next day in the Tribune, Horace Greeley said: "No other man ever made such an impression in his first appeal to a New York audience." From New York he went on a speaking trip through New England where he made a deep impression. He went home with

a national reputation. The strange story of his early life appealed to the masses of the people of the North; he was the subject of conversation and of inquiry. A friend sought data for a biography.

He said, "I admit that I am ambitious and that I would like to be President. I am not insensible to the compliment that you pay me and the interest that you manifest in the matter, but there is no such good luck in store for me as the Presidency of the United States. Besides, there is nothing in my early history that would interest you or anybody else." He also added, "I do not think that I am fitted for the Presidency"; and that, "men like Seward and Chase were entitled to take precedence." But the editor of the Central Illinois Gazette brought him out and after that the movement spread strongly.

Such friends as Davis, Sweet, Logan and Palmer and also his faithful partner, Herndon, continued to urge him to become an active candidate. He finally consented and became busy at the work of marshalling the support of his friends. He used all his well-known skill as a politician to forward his campaign, though nothing derogatory is to be inferred from these words concerning his methods, which were entirely honorable. He wrote a friend: "I am not in a position where it would hurt me much not to be nominated on the national ticket; but it would hurt me not to get the Illinois delegation . . . can you help me a little in this matter at your end of the vineyard?" The allegiance of his own state

was soon assured. At Decatur, May 9 and 10, 1860, the Republican state convention met in the big Wigwam, and Governor Oglesby, who presided, said, "A distinguished citizen whom Illinois is delighted to honor is present and should be invited to a place on the platform." Amid tumultuous applause Lincoln was lifted over the heads of the crowd to the platform. At that moment John Hanks theatrically entered bearing a couple of old fence rails and a flag and a placard on the rails, "Made in Sangamon bottom in 1830 by Abraham Lincoln and John Hanks." Again there was a sympathetic uproar and Lincoln made a speech appropriate for the occasion. When the tumult subsided the convention resolved that "Abraham Lincoln is the first choice of the Republicans of Illinois for the Presidency and their delegates are instructed to use every honorable means to secure his nomination, and to cast the vote of the state as a unit for him."

One week later, May 16, the national Republican convention met at Chicago in the "Wigwam," which had been built to hold ten thousand persons. Lincoln's friends, Davis, Judd, Palmer, Swett, Oglesby, were there working "like nailers," night and day without sleep. The candidates were Seward of New York, Lincoln of Illinois, Cameron of Pennsylvania, Chase of Ohio, Bates of Missouri; and others of less note. Seward's friends hoped, as Lincoln's friends dreaded, that Seward might be nominated by a rush on the first ballot. Lincoln's followers, contrary to his wishes, made a "necessary arrangement" with Cameron of

Pennsylvania by which he was to have a cabinet place in return for giving his support to Lincoln, who was nominated on the third ballot. William M. Evarts, who had led for Seward, made the usual motion to make the choice unanimous, which was done with tremendous tumult of applause. Hannibal Hamlin of Maine was nominated for Vice-president. Blaine says of Hamlin, "In strong common sense, in sagacity and sound judgment, in rugged integrity of character, Mr. Hamlin has had no superior among public men."

Down in Springfield, Lincoln was waiting, and when he got the news, he said, "There is a little woman down on Eighth Street who will be glad to hear this news," and he strode away to tell her.

Douglas was in Washington when he heard the news, and remarked, "There will not be a tar barrel left in Illinois tonight."

At once a committee of the convention were deputed to go to Springfield and give Lincoln formal notice. This ceremony, so elaborate in later days, was then very simple and immediate. They called upon Lincoln at his own home, where he was already feeling gloomy with the responsibility. The committee felt much misgiving as they noted his appearance and got their first impressions; but later, when he became aroused and spoke fitting words to which life were added by the fire of his earnest countenance, they felt reassured, and went away delighted.

In all the history of America, the selection of George Washington to lead the army of the

Revolution, is the only event to be compared in good fortune with this nomination of Abraham Lincoln; but to the country as a whole he was comparatively obscure and unknown. The "wise men" of the nation had some misgivings. While "Honest Abe, the rail splitter," might sound well to the masses, the party leaders could not be assured that rail splitting and mere honesty were sufficient qualifications for the President of a great republic in a great crisis. Nevertheless Seward and Chase supported him with a sincerity that delighted him, and the entire party entered into the campaign with great enthusiasm.

And very early in the campaign it seemed that the Republicans were quite likely to win; for the Democrats, in their convention at Charleston, divided; the Northern Democrats being for Douglas and the Southern Democrats against him. They adjourned to Baltimore, where Douglas was nominated, after which the extreme Southerners bolted and nominated Breckenridge. Also the border states organized a new party which they called the Constitutional Union Party and nominated John Bell.

Douglas made a most energetic campaign, even making speeches in the South, but the questions that Lincoln had made him answer in the great debate in Illinois in 1858 were not forgotten by the Southerners, who would have nothing to do with him, but supported Breckenridge.

Lincoln remained quietly in Springfield during the campaign, exercising most careful discretion as to what he said and the little that

he wrote. The Governor placed his own rooms at the statehouse at Lincoln's disposal, where he met callers and talked and joked pleasantly with all who came, but was careful to say nothing that would add to the confusion of tongues that already existed.

Some of the most radical abolitionists of the North were not at all pleased with Lincoln because he was conservative, practical, recognized slavery as existing under the constitution, stood for preserving the Union as the first consideration, restricting the extension of slavery, and hoped for gradual compensated emancipation, but favored nothing revolutionary or threatening to the integrity of the Union.

Many of the most ardent, but reasonable, abolitionists supported him as having the most practical policy for the time being.

The total popular vote was 4,680,000. Lincoln got 1,866,000; Douglas, 1,375,000; Breckenridge, 846,900; Bell, 590,000. Of the electoral vote, Lincoln got 180; Douglas, 12; Breckenridge, 72; Bell, 39. Lincoln carried the Northern States, Breckenridge the Southern States, Bell the border states of Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee, and Douglas New Jersey and Missouri. To show how the people were divided, Douglas, Breckenridge and Bell had some votes in nearly all states both North and South. Lincoln had no votes in the states farthest south, but carried all states north of the border states.

The career of Lincoln as President was made infinitely more difficult as well as all the more creditable to him by reason of the fact that he was not the choice of the majority of the peo-

ple, but of less than half of them; even less than half of the people of the Northern States.

South Carolina "hailed with delight" the news of the election of Lincoln as a justification for immediate secession, which they desired, rather than compromise or postponement; their Senators resigned; before Christmas the Palmetto flag floated over every federal building in that state, and early in January they fired on the ship "Star of the West" as she entered Charleston harbor with supplies for Fort Sumpter. By February seven of the Southern States—South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas—had seceded from the Union and formed "the Confederate States of America," with Jefferson Davis of Mississippi as President, and Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia as Vice-President.

Lincoln could, meanwhile, only wait in Springfield, during this most trying interregnum; while the uncertain and impotent Buchanan allowed the reins of government to slip from his weak hands, and many influential men at the North counselled for peace at any price. Lincoln was distressed, absent-minded, sad but also calm as he worked on his inaugural address—a tremendous responsibility under the circumstances; for in that address he must announce a policy in one of the gravest crises that ever confronted a ruler in this world—sorrowful unto death, he said, "I shall never be glad any more." Also he was beset with office-seekers and troubled with his cabinet appointments; for the agreement that

Judge Davis had made at the Chicago convention with Cameron of Pennsylvania was not to his liking.

As the time approached for his inauguration he visited his step-mother, made a pilgrimage to the grave of his father, and on February 11 started for Washington, after taking leave at Springfield, of his old friends, who gathered at the station early in the morning and stood bareheaded in the rain while he spoke these beautiful words of affectionate farewell from the platform of the coach:

“My friends, no one not in my situation can appreciate my feelings of sadness at this parting. To this place and the kindness of these people I owe everything. Here I have lived for a quarter of a century and passed from a young man to an old man. Here my children have been born and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting to Him who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.”

On the way he made short informal speeches—tactfully avoiding any announcement of policy—at Columbus, Cleveland, Buffalo, Albany and New York. On Washington’s birthday at



Philadelphia, he celebrated the admission of Kansas as a free state by raising over Independence Hall a new flag of thirty-four stars. He was deeply moved and spoke fervently of "that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gives liberty, not alone to the people of this country, but also hope to all the people of the world for all future times; which gave promise that in due time the weights would be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance." And finally, "If this country cannot be saved without giving up that principle, I was about to say I would rather be assassinated on this spot than to surrender it."

His reference to assassination may have been due to the report of detectives that they had discovered a plot to kill him as he went through Baltimore. Contrary to advice concerning his personal safety, he kept his engagement to address the legislature at Harrisburg before going on to Washington. In the Capital and the country thereabout were many Confederate sympathizers.

Even during the few days that he was in Washington before his inauguration, men over the country were betting that he would never be inaugurated. March 4, 1861, dawned in bright sunshine. At noon the aged Buchanan called upon Lincoln to escort him to the Capital, there to place upon the shoulders of the great Westerner the burden which had been too heavy for the infirm old diplomat. Together they drove down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol where the ceremony was held

in the east portico. Distinguished officials were there, but the crowd was small, because of the rumors of tragedy—and the aged Commander Scott had posted troops with instructions, “if any of them raise their heads or show a finger, shoot to kill.”

The moment came for the new President to take the oath of office. Lincoln, attired in clothes obviously new, was plainly embarrassed, and stood for an awkward moment holding his high hat in one hand and in the other a gold-headed ebony stick. Douglas, his old rival, stepped promptly forward with delightful grace and relieved him of hat and cane and held them for him—a beautiful incident the significance of which was long remembered. Senator Baker of Oregon—one of his old Springfield friends—formally presented him, and after he had read his address, the aged Chief Justice Taney, who had written the Dred Scott Decision, administered the oath of office.

His address, for which the nation had long been waiting, was read distinctly, so that all could hear—hear him say that “misunderstandings had caused differences;”—disavow any intentions to interfere with the existing institution of slavery, and even declare himself in favor of a new fugitive slave law. But concerning the Union he was firm. He clearly put the Union above any issue concerning slavery. He said: “The Union of these States is perpetual. . . . No state upon its own mere motion can lawfully get out of the Union. . . . I shall take care, as the Constitution itself

expressly enjoins me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all of the States," and he was determined "to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government and to collect the duties and imposts." And he closed with the beautiful peroration founded upon one of Seward's suggestions: "I am loathe to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break the bonds of our affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

The four years and forty days that remain of Lincoln's life is but the story of his wonderful part in our great Civil War.

When Lincoln turned from his inauguration to take up the duties of his office he faced a responsibility greater than that which had rested upon Washington, as great as had ever rested upon any man on this planet in all the ages. His own dear country—that nation which lovers of mankind had hoped would lead the world in advancing human welfare, was already rent asunder and everywhere the men who had been accustomed to lead in thought and action were divided. Men of influence at the North advised peaceful separation. Radicals at the South declared that they would take Washington and make it the Confederate

Capital. Prominent men at the North declared that the South could not be and should not be coerced. And with these terrible problems puzzling him, Lincoln was also pestered with office-seekers until he remarked, "This struggle and scramble for office will yet test our institutions." For his Cabinet he chose William H. Seward, Secretary of State; Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury; Simon Cameron, Secretary of War; Gideon Wells, Secretary of the Navy; Caleb B. Smith, Secretary of the Interior; Edward Bates, Attorney-General; Montgomery Blair, Postmaster-General.

The first day after inauguration the whole problem was presented to him in a letter from Major Anderson with his hungry soldiers at Fort Sumpter. He wanted provisions and reinforcements; twenty thousand soldiers would be necessary to hold the fort, and the whole standing army numbered sixteen thousand men. General Scott advised evacuation. Lincoln said, "When Anderson goes out of Fort Sumpter I shall have to go out of the White House." The military advisers differed: the cabinet differed; and while Lincoln pondered over the problem, Seward acquiesced in the general assumption that he rather than Lincoln was the real head of the Government; and accordingly prepared and laid before Lincoln "Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration," in which after complaining of the "lack of policy" he boldly proposed to make war on Spain and France, and seek "explanations from Great Britain and Russia," and sug-

gested that the direction of this policy be devolved by the President "upon some member of his cabinet," and indicating with modest significance "it is not my especial province; but I neither seek to assume or evade responsibility." Lincoln met this proposal in a magnanimous spirit, saying, "As to the proposed policy, if this must be done I must do it. . . . When a general line of policy is adopted, I apprehend that there is no danger of it being changed without good reason, or continuing to be a subject of unnecessary debate; still, upon points arising in its progress I wish, and suppose that I am entitled to have, the advice of all the cabinet."

Thus Seward came to understand, as the nation later understood, who was the head of the government, and how wise and capable he was; and this superiority, Seward was great enough to freely acknowledge two months later in the words: "Executive force and vigor are rare qualities. . . . the President is the best of us."

On April 12 the Confederates fired on Fort Sumpter, and by that act of aggression unified and aroused the North. Douglas promptly assured the President of his support and telegraphed his followers that he had given his pledge "to sustain the President in the exercise of his constitutional functions to preserve the Union, maintain the government and defend the Federal Capital." Thus ended the talk of compromise, conciliation, concession, and also the discussion of the right or wrong of slavery. The President in his patient, kindly wisdom

had substituted the issue of Union, and had waited until the Confederacy was the aggressor. On April 15 he called for 75,000 volunteers and called Congress to convene in extra session July 4.

The response was immediate and resolute. The North, glad that the long suspense was over, offered hundreds of thousands of men for the Union. The Confederates threatened to capture Washington and make it the Confederate capital, and for a few days there was grave fear that they would do so. The Sixth Massachusetts was assaulted by a mob in the streets of Baltimore, four soldiers and twelve rioters killed and many wounded; and the Southern sympathisers in Maryland objected to the passing of soldiers through that state. The President, as usual conciliatory and patient but firm, said, "there is no piece of American soil too good to be pressed by the foot of a loyal soldier as he marches to the defense of the capital of his country."

Among the President's great tasks then were to prevent the secession of any more states, to prevent European recognition of the Confederacy, and to create an army and navy. His diplomacy saved for the Union Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri.

With increasing confidence and power the President watched over men and events; cautiously and patiently, with mistakes and successes; amid acrid criticism, noisy abuse and malignant misrepresentation, he made his slow sure way.

The first disaster at Manassas staggered and

steadied the North. The President called to the command of the army of the Potomac, General George B. McClellan, who had been winning small successes and sending large telegrams in Western Virginia. He was brilliant, bold, spectacular, a good organizer and soon trained the strong young raw recruits—farmers and artisans—into one of the finest armies the world had ever witnessed. While McClellan was drilling and preparing in the East, Fremont in the West assumed the authority to issue a proclamation emancipating the slaves of all non-Union men in Missouri; an act which delighted the abolitionists of the North but created consternation in the border states and added to the perplexities of the President. In order to save for the Union cause the border states of Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri the President had to revoke the proclamation of Fremont and suffer the thoughtless abuse of the abolitionists who even talked of impeachment. They saw only the immediate and moral issue of slavery rather than the ultimate political issue of Union—in their premature haste to free a few slaves they would have lost the whole cause both of freedom and of Union. Lincoln loved freedom as much as they but was more wise; nevertheless the patient President suffered much from the misunderstanding. His patience was never exhausted though terribly tried by the unjust criticism from many sources, by the piques and prides of new-made Generals who felt able to command armies though they could not command their own tempers; by the impertinent Buell who failed to

move into East Tennessee and stop the Confederate depredations against loyal citizens; and by the unappreciative McClellan who was too young to understand the President's fatherly solicitude, and who drilled and drilled but did not go forward to fight.

In the light of the troubles that the President had with embryo-Generals one can appreciate the narrative that a caller finding him pondering over some papers asked what he was doing and got the reply, "O nothing much—just making a few Generals." And once when a message bearer gravely told him that the enemy had captured a couple of Generals and some mules, he replied, "What a pity to lose all those mules."

Bull Run had made the people more cautious about crying "on to Richmond," and so all Washington took holidays and enjoyed going out to see McClellan's grand army manoeuvres—all except the President for whom there was to be no more joy—no more holidays. To a sympathetic friend he replied, "I want not sympathy for myself but success for our cause."

Again the wisdom of the President was tested and proved in the case of Mason and Slidell, the Confederate commissioners to Great Britain, whom a Federal warship had taken from a British mail packet. A British ultimatum demanded immediate restitution and apology, while public sentiment at home demanded that they be retained; but the President averted trouble with England by sending the commissioners on their way.

In the President's message to Congress, some



days later, he made no reference at all to this affair because he knew when to be silent as well as when to explain.

Evidence of the true greatness and the forgiveness of the President and that he put the cause far above any personal consideration is in the fact of his appointing Edwin M. Stanton Secretary of War, to succeed Cameron to whom he had given the post as Minister to Russia. Stanton was a Democrat, a friend of McClellan, and had never ceased to speak of Lincoln with that gross abuse with which he had greeted Lincoln the lawyer in the McCormick case at Cincinnati in 1859. But with all Stanton's injustice to Lincoln—his revilings and his insults—he accepted the cabinet place when Lincoln offered it to him. But if Stanton was truculent, a tyrant and a bully—ininitely more important—he was honest and strong in office and broke the ring of grafters who had been robbing the government, and did his work heroically. That was what the President wished. And Stanton soon learned as others learned that Lincoln was master of every situation. Lincoln's friends opposed the appointment of Stanton and reminded the President of how crudely Stanton had treated him at Cincinnati, but the President had no thought for himself or his own future. He was concerned only to get the men who could best serve the great cause.

Lincoln's peculiar fitness for the tremendous tribulations of the Presidency at that time is further proved by his experiences with the recalcitrant McClellan. The General had been

drilling and getting ready for six months,—both President and public desired action; but the General wished to become so fully prepared that an assured and decisive victory would end the war. The President was patient, persuasive, reasonable: the General was querulous, petty and sometimes actually insulting. The two differed as to their plans for advancing upon the Confederates. While the General assumed a contempt for the opinions of a civilian, time has shown that the President was wise.

Burdened as the great heart was with the weight of the nation, additional sorrows came into the White House when his two boys, Willie and Tad, fell ill with typhoid fever. By day and by night the grief-crazed father divided his time between watching the bedside of his boys and watching over the struggling nation. Though always religious in the deepest sense, the death of Willie seemed to strengthen his insight into the mysteries of the spiritual life. For awhile he seemed grief-crazed, and ever after, the great soul that had always been compassionate was even more tender in its broodings over all the people of the nation, both South and North, and in many beautiful instances he softened the severities of war.

During the early part of the war the North was not at all unanimous in its opposition to slavery, and could only be united in the purpose to save the Union; but slavery could not be ignored. From the Southern standpoint the war was caused by slavery, and even the Union generals were compelled to deal with fugitive slaves that came within their lines. Halleck

sent them out of camp; Buell and Hooker allowed their owners to come and take them; Butler held them as "contraband of war." As the war dragged on longer than the people had anticipated the abolition sentiment in the North grew until from press and pulpit there came adjurations to "free the slaves." The politicians told the President the "will of the people," and the preachers told him the "will of God"; but the great mind of the President held his own counsel, for he knew that the slave-holding but loyal border states presented a peculiar problem.

Early in 1862 he recommended to Congress the adoption of a joint resolution that the "United States co-operate with any state which may adopt gradual abolishment of slavery, giving to such state pecuniary aid." The resolution was adopted, but the border states would have nothing to do with the plan. Later General Hunter in proclaiming martial law over certain Southern territory, proclaimed "the persons in these states, heretofore held as slaves, forever free." The President revoked the order as he had revoked a similar action on the part of Fremont, adding firmly, "whether it be competent for me as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, to declare the slaves of any state or states free, and whether at any time, in any case, it shall have become a necessity of government to exercise such supposed power, are questions which, under my responsibility, I reserve to myself." And again he appealed to the people of the border states to adopt his plan of gradual compensated emancipation, proved

the wisdom of his plan by unanswerable logic, and showed that the cost of such compensation was much less than the cost of the probable prolongation of the war. The loyal slave-holders of the border states were not ready to give up their slaves.

Then the President began to contemplate emancipation, but kept his purposes to himself; kept his secret so well that even after he had determined upon emancipation and was being criticised for not taking that step he replied to his critics, "My paramount object is to save the Union and not either to save or destroy slavery." Horace Greeley retorted with abuse, indicating that Greeley was unable to see the wisdom of the President's policy—for those whose support was necessary to win the war were not yet ready for emancipation.

When preachers called to reveal to him, "the will of God" he replied, "If it is probable that God would reveal His will to others on a point so connected with my duty, it might be supposed He would reveal it directly to me."

All these months he had been at work with his slow but accurate thought, framing in secret the most momentous document in American history since the Declaration of Independence. He did this in the cipher-room of the War Department telegraph office, where he was accustomed to spend anxious hours waiting for news from the boys at the front, and also to seek what rest he could in thus hiding away from the never-ending stream of tormentors, office-seekers, politicians and emissaries of sage advice.

Emancipation was in his mind even while, for good reasons, he made no reference to it. He waited for the right time—waited for victory—waited in great patience and great anguish. And when he did first announce his purpose of emancipation it was to apply only to those “persons held as slaves within any state or designated part of a state the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States.” Thus sparing the loyal border states holding slaves, and allowing a way of escape for others that should cease their rebellion. It was conservative but wise. On the one hand the radical abolitionists were not satisfied, and on the other hand the masses were not all ready to give him hearty support in it. But he said, “I must do the best I can and bear the responsibility of taking the course which I think I ought to take.” It was thus this silent self-reliant man, without intimates, without supporting friends, bore almost alone on his resolute shoulders, the mighty weight of responsibility. Once more he urged upon Congress his old policy of gradual compensated emancipation. He plead:—“We say that we are for the Union. The world will not forget that we say this. We know how to save the Union. The world knows that we know how to save it. We—even we here—hold the power and bear the responsibility. In giving freedom to the slave we assure freedom to the free,—honorable alike in what we give and what we preserve. We shall nobly save or meanly lose THE LAST BEST HOPE OF EARTH. Other means may succeed, this cannot fail. The way is

peaceful; generous; just; a way which, if followed, the world will forever applaud and God must forever bless." But they would not, and the lonely man in the White House,—kind eyes more deeply sunken, bronze face more deeply furrowed, sad tones more deeply affected—went about his duties asking sympathy nor counsel of anyone.

On New Year's Day, 1863, after the great reception was over, he signed the final Proclamation of Emancipation. Though at home there was still ridicule and abuse, in England the effect of the Proclamation was significant; for there the laboring men were in dire distress because they could get no cotton for their mills; but these English laborers—hearing of the Emancipation Proclamation—felt that the cause of the Union was the cause of freedom and of labor—and though the wealthy mill-owners of England, who were not suffering would, some of them, gladly have destroyed the Union and perpetuated slavery to get cotton; the laborers—even while starving—brought pressure to bear upon the English government to prevent further aid to the Confederacy, heroically preferring starvation in the cause of freedom. Lincoln referred to these actions on the part of England's laborers as "an instance of Christian heroism which has not been surpassed in any age or any country." And later those English laborers built a monument to Lincoln on which they inscribed, "Lover of Humanity."

Everyone but Lincoln had lost patience with McClellan's overcautiousness and when he failed to follow Lee's retreat from Antietam,

Lincoln removed him and placed in command Burnside, whose defeat at Fredericksburg caused him to be replaced by Hooker, whose defeat at Chancellorsville caused him to be replaced by Meade, who disappointed the President in not following up the victory at Gettysburg.

July 4, 1863, Gettysburg and Vicksburg, decisive victories, coming together should have ended the war. The Confederates could not win after that, but still they fought on. On November 19, 1863, the National Cemetery at the battlefield of Gettysburg was dedicated; and after Edward Everett had delivered the formal oration of the occasion, Lincoln delivered the most notable short speech that has ever been delivered in the English language. A copy of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address is given in another volume of this series called "Speeches of Lincoln."

The tide has turned but much costly fighting is still necessary, first in East Tennessee, and later in Virginia, and also Sherman must fight his way into the very heart of the South and break its lines of communication before the resolute Confederates will yield.

In the West, Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, Pittsburgh Landing, and Vicksburg were the victories that made Grant known as the most successful Union general. The President advanced him to the rank of Lieutenant General, brought him East, placed him in command of all the armies, and gave him the task of beating Lee, taking Richmond and ending the war.

In the fall of 1864, notwithstanding some opposition, Lincoln was re-elected President. Again during this campaign, his attitude toward his critics and his opponents attested still further his true greatness, magnanimity and devotion to duty. Though he desired to be re-elected he would make no effort toward that end, but instead gave his entire energies to the work of saving the Union. Chase in the cabinet was an open candidate against his chief. Lincoln proved that he had no resentment by later appointing Chase as Chief Justice in the place of the aged Roger B. Taney who died. When friends told the President that he would surely be defeated for re-election if he approved another draft of soldiers, he replied that the cause did not require his re-election but did require more soldiers—and at once ordered a new draft for 500,000 additional men.

Lincoln breathed a most beautiful spirit of forgiveness in his Second Inaugural Address which is printed in full in the volume of this series, "Speeches of Lincoln."

In March, 1865, Grant sent a message saying that he was about to close in on Lee and end the war, and invited Lincoln to visit Grant's headquarters. And that is how it was that the President, being at Grant's headquarters, could enter Richmond the day after the Confederates retreated. So Lincoln, with his small son Tad and Admiral Porter, escorted by a little group of sailors, simply, on foot, entered the abandoned capital, not as one bringing the vengeance of a conqueror, but the love of a liberator. One of the great moments of all history



was when an aged negro, baring his white wool, made reverent obeisance to the President, and Lincoln in recognition took off his high hat.

He remained two days in Richmond discussing the plans for the restoration of federal authority, counseling kindness and forgiveness. "Let them down easy," he said to the military governor; "get them to plowing and gathering in their own little crops." Thus he was preparing to "bind up the nation's wounds," with a spiritual development so far beyond his contemporaries that they could not even understand him.

Then he went back to Washington where he heard of Lee's surrender, and two days later, to a large crowd at the White House, delivered a carefully prepared speech outlining his policy of reconstruction, such as he had already begun in Louisiana. Already he was being criticised for being "too kind to the rebels."

That was the last speech he ever made.

Little Tad said, "Father has never been happy since we came to Washington." His laughter had failed, he had aged rapidly, his shoulders were bent, dreadful dreams had haunted him and on the night of the 13th he had one which oppressed him. But the next day was the fourth anniversary of the evacuation of Fort Sumpter, —Good Friday, April 14. And at last he was happy, sharing with his people the joy that came with the end of the war.

He took a drive with Mrs. Lincoln and they planned for the future—they would save a little money and go back to Springfield and he

would practice law again. To his wife this unnatural joy was portentous—she remembered that he had been like this just before little Willie died. In the evening they went to Ford's Theatre. Stanton tried to dissuade them because the secret service had heard rumors of assassination. Because Stanton insisted on a guard Major Rathbone was along. At 9 o'clock the party entered the President's box—the President was very happy—at 10:20 a shot was heard—Major Rathbone sprang to grapple with the assassin and was slashed with a dagger. The assassin fell as he sprang from the box to the stage, where he brandished his bloody dagger, yelled with terrible theatricalism, "*sic semper tyrannis*," and stalking lamely from the platform disappeared in the darkness and rode away. The President was unconscious from the first, and as they bore him from the theatre a lodger from a house across the street said "Take him up to my room," where he lay unconscious until next morning when he ceased to breathe; and Stanton at his bedside said, "Now he belongs to the Ages."

Someone had recognized the assassin as John Wilkes Booth, an actor, a fanatic in the Southern cause. And in killing Lincoln he did his people of the South the greatest possible harm.

The North had been decorated with celebration of victory; now it was bowed and dazed with grief and rage. Those that had abused him and maligned him and opposed him now came to understand him as in a new light

they saw him transfigured by his great sacrifices.

They reverently folded the body in the flag and carried it first to the White House and then to the Capitol where it lay in state; and then they began that long journey back to Springfield over the very route he had come on his way to the Capital in 1861. Everywhere in cities and in towns great crowds gathered, heedless of night or rain or storm, and even as the train sped over the open country at night little groups of farmers could be seen by the roadside in the dim light watching for the train and waving their lanterns in a sad farewell.

Whatever anger and resentment the North, may have felt, the weeping thousands who looked upon the face of Lincoln as it was borne homeward saw only forgiveness and peace.

But his beautiful dream of amnesty was not to be realized. Mutual forgiveness and reconciliation were ideals too high for many of his contemporaries at that time, and their spirit of revenge bore its inevitable fruit of injustice and bitterness in the days of reconstruction that followed. How different it might all have been had Lincoln continued to live. How his great influence would have helped in the solution of the nation's problems after the war. A besotted wretch snuffed out the most important life on earth that day.

Misguided men of his time ridiculed him because they were unable to comprehend his lofty ideals or see the practical wisdom of his

great purposes. They measured him by their own puny standards and in condemning him only condemned themselves. His sad life, his tragic death, his immortal glory are one with all the reformers, prophets and saviors of the world. As war scenes receded, as men's prejudices cooled, as the mighty issues were better understood, men came to see how truly great he was. He finished successfully the most important and most difficult task ever bequeathed to one mortal man in all history.

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